EXAMPLES of PRISON RECORDS in COUNTY CORK

(1834 – 1839)

Compiled by Frank O'Donovan

Some years ago I was browsing through some Prison records for County Cork I stumbled across one which "caught my eye", so to speak. It was a Donovan man in 1853 and the reason he was sent to prison was for '***Furious Driving***'. Now the motor car was not around in that era so I can only guess that he was driving a donkey and cart, a horse and cart or trap. Getting a little more curious I saw a wide variety of offences many of which would not stand up in a Court today. This compilation is published in the link at the end of this document.

Soon afterwards I thought it would be interesting to view offences in years before 1840 so I took 200 sample offences for each of the years 1834 to 1839, inclusive, and below is the summary of my finding from this selected sample. I believe that I got a representative sample to give us a flavour of the "crimes" of that 5-year period.

Shortly we will view the various types of offences committed but first let us look at a few typical crimes from the period:

- Runaway Apprentice
- Assaulting His Wife
- Provoking To Fight
- Embezzling Money
- Selling Liquor Without Licence
- Plundering A Wreck
- Unlawfully Assembly
- Unruly Servants
- Obtaining A Decree Fraudulently
- Unlawfully Pawning A Bed
- Breaking Open A Door Of A Pound
- Having A Stolen Cow In His Possession
- Having Barrack Blanket In Possession
- Riot Clonakilty
- Having Smuggled Tobacco
- Stealing Oats
- Assembling At Night And Cutting Timber
- Stealing Potatoes And Thereatening
- Rescuing A Pig Taken Under A Decree
- Stealing Manure
- Stealing Money From A Chapel
- Trespass Cutting Grass And Rushes
- Suspicion Of Stealing Money
- Cutting A Tree At Night

The following table sets out the common crime types with the corresponding number of that crime committed for the 1,200 sample covering the 5-year period 1834 - 1839. Clearly stealing is top of the list with 406 instances or 33.8% of crimes. (note: I did not do any spelling corrections to some obviously mis-spelled words in the table)

Offence type	Number out of 1200	% of Total	
Stealing	406	33.8	%
Assault	189	15.8	%
Debtor	135	11.3	%
Riot	47	3.9	%
Murder	43	3.6	%
Trespass	37	3.1	%
Court Martial / Naval or Military Offender	28	2.3	%
Other	27	2.3	%
Larceny	23	1.9	%
Burglary & Robbery	23	1.9	%
Breaking Glass / Windows	18	1.5	%
Vagrant	18	1.5	%
Receiving / In Possession	15	1.3	%
Absconding	15	1.3	%
Rape	14	1.2	%
Green Wax	13	1.1	%
Threatening	11	0.9	%
Property damage	11	0.9	%
Family	10	0.8	%
Taking Forcible Possession	9	0.8	%
Excise Laws	9	0.8	%
Swindling / Fraud / Forgery	8	0.7	%
Disobeying	8	0.7	%
Manslaughter	8	0.7	%
Trees / Plants	8	0.7	%
Deserter	8	0.7	%
Drunk	7	0.6	%
Breach of the Peace	7	0.6	%
Perjury	7	0.6	%
Smuggling	6	0.5	%
Embezzling	5	0.4	%
Suspicion of	4	0.3	%
Disorderly	4	0.3	%
Drunk & Disorderly	3	0.3	%
Pawning	3	0.3	%
Attempt to	3	0.3	%
Unlicensed Fire Arms	3	0.3	%
Lunatic	2	0.2	%
Indecent Exposure	1	0.1	%
Obstructing	1	0.1	%
Convicts in transit	1	0.1	%
Contempt	1	0.1	%
Writing Threating Letters	1	0.1	%
TOTAL	**1,200**	**100.0**	%

Stealing was the "most popular", so what did people steal?

Stealing sub-divisions	Number	%	
Clothes	109	26.8	%
Money	50	12.3	%
Sheep / Lamb	48	11.8	%
Timber	29	7.1	%
Other	21	5.2	%
Potatoes	16	3.9	%
Food	15	3.7	%
Farm items / tools	13	3.2	%
Pig	13	3.2	%
Poultry	11	2.7	%
Cow	9	2.2	%
Turnips	8	2.0	%
Clock / Watch	7	1.7	%
Horse	7	1.7	%
Base Coin (making /using)	6	1.5	%
Wool	6	1.5	%
Animals	5	1.2	%
Furniture / Household Items	5	1.2	%
Copper / Lead	5	1.2	%
Boots / Shoes	4	1.0	%
Highway Robbery	3	0.7	%
Grass	3	0.7	%
Wheat / Oats / Barley / Corn	3	0.7	%
Hay / Straw	1	0.2	%
Turf	1	0.2	%
Furze	1	0.2	%
Unspecified	7	1.7	%
Total:	**406**	**100**	**%**

Here we see stealing clothes was over double the number imprisoned for stealing money

Then to look at the clothes section and the types of clothes stolen

Clothes sub division			
Fabrics (e.g. cotton, linen)	11	10.1	%
Coat	9	8.3	%
Shirt	8	7.3	%
Cloak	7	6.4	%
Gown	7	6.4	%
Shawl	4	3.7	%
Blanket	2	1.8	%
Sheets	3	2.8	%
Petticoat	2	1.8	%
Handkerchief	1	0.9	%
Unspecified / Other	55	50.5	%
TOTAL	**109**	**100.0**	**%**

Surnames of those imprisoned and frequency of that surname in the sample of 1,200 imprisonments.

Surname	Number	Surname	Number	Surname	Number
McCarthy	64	Scanlon	4	Pigott	1
Sullivan	59	Connell	4	McLoghlin	1
Mahony	58	Fitzgerald	3	Treacy	1
Murphy	54	Slattery	3	Slayter	1
Donovan	49	Leahy	3	Gower	1
Leary	40	Scott	3	O Hara	1
Regan	34	Adams	3	Ives	1
Shea	34	Rogers	3	Trendgill	1
Barry	34	Young	3	Aston	1
Daly	31	Brown	3	Skipton	1
Sheehan	31	Whitaker	3	Stowe	1
Healy	30	Moloney	3	McArthur	1
Crowley	29	Whelan	3	Wheeler	1
Hurley	27	Robinson	3	Sisson	1
Lynch	27	Whooley	3	Turlon	1
Neill	26	Ronayne	3	Barrett	1
Brien	26	Murnane	3	Bride	1
Burke	25	Harty	3	Connors	1
Cronin	23	Singleton	3	Everitt	1
Murray	21	Sillis	2	Osborne	1
Harrington	21	Maguire	2	Evanson	1
Ryan	21	Collins	2	Savage	1
Cotter	20	Nagle	2	Buchane	1
Hayes	16	Buckley	2	Goold	1
Sweeny	14	Colins	2	Welpley	1
Power	14	Flynn	2	Symons	1
White	13	Sisk	2	Milner	1
Keohane	13	Stephens	2	Counahan	1
Molony	13	Skinner	2	Sliney	1
Kennedy	12	Ronan	2	Scanlan	1
Delany	12	Ward	2	Harding	1
Manning	11	Irwin	2	Miller	1
Galvin	10	Deasy	2	Halpin	1
Sweeney	10	Tassop	1	Anson	1
Lucey	9	Lombard	1	Warren	1
Butler	9	Connelly	1	Duggan	1
Brennan	9	Coughlan	1	Buttimore	1
Kenny	8	Greanes	1	O'Hara	1
Williams	8	Sexton	1	Sloane	1
Looney	7	Hara	1	McAllen	1
Driscoll	7	Cremin	1	Twohig	1
Forde	7	Hanlon	1	Davis	1
Vaughan	6	Manley	1	Burchill	1
Supple	5	Hodnett	1	Halloran	1
Evans	5	Synnot	1	Skilty	1
Johnson	5	Rourke	1	Mirane	1
Allen	5	Scofield	1	Mirann	1
Russell	5	Feen	1	Armes	1
Norris	4	Gould	1	Sinclair	1
Foley	4	Herlihy	1	Milward	1

Surname	Number	Surname	Number	Surname	Number
Breen	1	McConn	1	Maskill	1
Hosford	1	Conway	1	Upton	1
Ivory	1	Shanahan	1	Bushe	1
Haneen	1	Silk	1	Waters	1
Bryan	1	Minehane	1	Connor	1
Whaly	1	Ashton	1	**Total**	**1,200**
Brewer	1	Forehane	1		
Rooney	1	Grady	1		

Number of Assaults on Police Constables

Number of assaults = 18 which is equal to 9.5% of all assaults

To view the report:

SAMPLE OF COUNTY CORK PRISON RECORDS (1840 – 1870)

please click the below link

https://bmdnotices.com/Prisoners.pdf